



The Natural Resource Challenge



AUGUST 2001

PWR CHALLENGE HIGHLIGHTS

What are some of the accomplishments of the Natural Resource Challenge so far? Here's a quick summary for the Pacific West Region:

- Exotic Plant Management Team established at Haleakala National Park.
- Vital Signs Monitoring funded for North Coast and North Cascades Networks, and start-up funding received for Mediterranean Coast and San Francisco Bay Area Networks.
- Completed numerous inventories in all eight networks.
- The Pacific Coast Learning Center was created this year (Fort Point NHS, Golden Gate NRA, John Muir NHS, Muir Woods NM, Pinnacles NM and Point Reyes NS). In FY02 two new Learning Centers will be created in PWR (see page 2).
- Base funding increases for exotic plants and t&e programs at Haleakala, John Day, Mojave, and Sequoia and Kings Canyon.
- Coral Reef positions were hired at War in the Pacific, Kalaupapa, National Park of Samoa, Haleakala, and University of Hawaii.
- Conducted Air Pollution Emission Inventories in all California parks.
- Conduct "Vital Signs" workshops at several parks in PWR.

The National Park Service cares for
special places saved by the
American people so that all may
experience our heritage.

MESSAGE FROM JOHN REYNOLDS, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, PWR

Welcome to this first edition of the Natural Resource Challenge Newsletter for the Pacific West Region. The Natural Resource Challenge grew from the realization that as stewards of our great national treasures contained in parks, we must work towards preserving resources using the best scientific knowledge and methods available. The NPS has defined the Challenge as "an ongoing effort to restore and retain the natural wonders in America's national parks." We must strive to ensure that the additional resources we receive for the Challenge are leveraged and used exclusively for their intended purpose.

I'm excited about using this opportunity to spread the word about our efforts in the Pacific West Region to "change the culture of the National Park Service," to borrow the concept Richard Sellars used in his book, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, to one attuned with using ecological principles in the management of our parks. As you will see in this first issue of this newsletter, a number of exciting accomplishments are underway, and more are in progress every day. We encourage NPS staff, our partners, and the public to become involved in making the Challenge an integral part of our daily work of preserving national parks unimpaired for enjoyment by present and future generations. We hope that you will consider contributing to future editions of our newsletter and share your copy with others.

NEW LEARNING CENTERS

What is a Learning Center?

The Natural Resources Challenge commits to establishing 32 learning centers around the country by 2005. Learning centers will be places where science and education are combined to preserve and protect areas of national significance. At these sites, parks will nurture the next generation of scientists, educators and the public that will guide management and leaders through the 21st century. Conceived as public/private partnerships, learning centers will support research activities, accumulate and synthesize information, and transmit that knowledge to the public, so that people will be aware of the health and status of the national parks and regions in which they are located. Visiting researchers are not limited to those working for the NPS, and the audience is not limited to the school age audience targeted for most environmental education programs. The minimum NPS contribution in this partner-based effort is \$225,000 annually for a research coordinator and an education specialist.

Three Learning Centers So Far

Last fiscal year the Challenge funded the first four Learning Centers. One of these, ***Pacific Coast Learning Center*** headquartered at Point Reyes NS, is in PWR Region. Five additional centers were selected competitively in FY2002, of which two are in PWR. These ***are The Center for Teaching New America*** (Santa Monica Mountains NRA, Channel Islands NP, and Cabrillo NM) and ***North Coast and Cascades Learning Center Network*** (Mount Rainier NP, North Cascades NP, and Olympic NP, Columbia Cascades SO).

Pacific Coast Learning Center

(Serving Eugene O'Neill NHS, Fort Point NHS, Golden Gate NRA, John Muir NHS, Muir Woods NM, Pinnacles NM and Point Reyes NS)

Historic Hagmaier Ranch at Point Reyes NS serves as the principal headquarters for this Center with a focus on coastal research and stewardship education. This Center is a field station for collaborative research on coastal

ecosystems. It provides critical office space, housing, computer information systems, laboratory facilities, reference library and specimen collections. The Center also provides the means to integrate research with environmental education and outreach.

The Center for Teaching New America

(Serving Santa Monica Mountains NRA, Channel Islands NP, and Cabrillo NM)

The Center will be a major education provider and community partner by connecting and establishing a series of existing (10) and new (3) research and education centers. The Center's multiple locations will be supported by a central facility at historic Rancho Sierra Vista and will serve as a model for the integration of ecological and cultural research projects carried out by regional universities and colleges into innovative park programs. Research priorities include the Mediterranean ecosystem, archeological and cultural resources of the Santa Monica Mountains, Channel Islands and Cabrillo, fire ecology, and habitat fragmentation.

North Coast and Cascades Learning Center Network

(Serving Mount Rainier NP, North Cascades NP, and Olympic NP, Columbia Cascades SO)

The focus of the Center network is the Greater Puget Sound; from the Crest of the North Cascades west to the Pacific Coast and from the Canadian Border south to the Columbia River. Principal research and education themes are monitoring ecosystem health, minimizing human activities that damage ecosystem health, ecological restoration and preservation of biological diversity.



“Don't whine. Support the Natural Resources Challenge and give it a chance to succeed.”

Don Neubacher, Superintendent of Point Reyes NS,
at the George Wright Society Conference, 2001

AIR QUALITY CHALLENGE

Natural Resource Challenge opportunities in 2002 potentially include the placement of 1 or 2 air resource specialists and additional air quality monitoring in the Pacific West Region. NPS Air Resource Division's (ARD) goal is to provide new air resource positions and monitoring for improved geographic representation, with emphasis on NPS units most vulnerable to degradation caused by air pollution.

Pacific West Region recommendations to ARD for the new air resource specialists requested they be assigned primary responsibilities following the Inventory & Monitoring Program Network boundaries. Judy Rocchio, the current Regional Air Resources Coordinator, will cover air resource needs in the San Francisco Bay, Klamath, and Pacific Islands Networks, and will continue to maintain her regional coordination role. Annie Esperanza, full-time Air Resource Specialist at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, will increase her current duties to cover air resource issues in the Sierra Network. Two new PWR air resource specialists are possible. One would be located in the Columbia Cascades Support Office in Seattle and would serve the North Coast/Cascades and Northern Semi-Arid Networks. The second one would be located at Joshua Tree National Park and would serve the Mojave Desert and Mediterranean Coast Networks. The new positions would also serve as air quality Science Advisors for parks throughout the region.

Recommendations to ARD regarding air quality monitoring included new monitoring at Channel Islands, Crater Lake, Craters of the Moon, Hawaii Volcanoes, Joshua Tree, Lake Roosevelt, Mount Rainier, North Cascades, Olympic, Point Reyes, Redwood, Santa Monica Mountains, and Sequoia & Kings Canyon. For more information about the potential new air quality specialist positions or air quality monitoring projects, contact Judy Rocchio at 501-817-1431.



KNOW YOUR NETWORKS

Here are the Inventory and Monitoring Networks established in the Pacific West Region. In an effort to increase our integration with the Natural Resource Challenge, we have also restructured our regional natural resource advisory committee along these same networks.

North Coast and Cascades Network: Ebey's Landing NHR, Fort Clatsop NMem, Fort Vancouver NHS, Mount Rainier NP, North Cascades NP, Olympic NP, and San Juan Island NHP

Northern Semi-Arid Network: Big Hole NB, City of Rocks NR, Craters of the Moon NM, Hagerman Fossil Beds NM, John Day Fossil Beds NM, Lake Roosevelt NRA, Nez Perce NHP, and Whitman Mission NHS

San Francisco Bay Area Network: Eugene O'Neill NHS, Fort Point NHS, Golden Gate NRA, John Muir NHS, Muir Woods NM, Pinnacles NM, and Point Reyes NS

Mojave Desert Network: Death Valley NP, Great Basin NP, Joshua Tree NP, Lake Mead NRA, Manzanar NHS, and Mojave NPRES

Mediterranean Coast Network: Cabrillo NM, Channel Islands NP, and Santa Monica Mountains NRA

Sierra Network: Devils Postpile NM, Sequoia Kings Canyon NP, and Yosemite NP

Pacific Island Network: American Memorial Park, Haleakala NP, Hawaii Volcanoes NP, Kaloko-Honokohau NHP, Kalaupapa NHP, National Park of American Samoa, Pu'ukohola Heiau NHS, Pu'uhonua o Honaunau NHP, and War in the Pacific HP

Klamath Network: Crater Lake NP, Oregon Caves NM, Redwood NP, Lava Beds NM, Lassen Volcanic NP, Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity NRA

LEARNING CENTERS MEET

Over 50 people met at Point Reyes National Seashore during the week of March 12, 2001. Acting Director Deny Galvin and Comptroller Bruce Sheaffer were able to attend, as were people from both funded and unfunded centers. Park personnel who wanted to share their ideas initiated the meeting. It provided a good opportunity for everyone to develop a common understanding of the learning center concept, as well as explore the variety of ways the concept can be implemented.



POTENTIAL FY02 EXOTIC PLANT MANAGEMENT TEAMS SELECTED

Three PWR teams have been selected through a competitive process for possible future funding as a part of the Natural Resource Challenge in FY 2002. They are Lake Mead, California, and North Coast & Cascades. These teams were selected from 14 very competitive proposals that were submitted Service wide. The proposals were reviewed and ranked by a highly qualified and diverse panel of National Park Service and Forest Service experts at a proposal review held in Fort Collins, CO in February, 2001. Criteria for reviewing the proposals included: significance of resource at risk; severity of threats to resources, readiness, program design, and cost effectiveness.



REMINDER!!!

The third round of Learning Center Proposals is out. The Call for Proposals for FY03 Learning Centers is due by SEPTEMBER 4, 2001



Endangered Myrtle's Silverspot Butterfly, part of the fauna of California's National Parks and a small part of why meeting the Challenge is so important

WE'VE MOVED!

The Pacific West Regional Office and the Pacific Great Basin Support Office has moved to Oakland, California, during the month of July. Our new address is:

National Park Service
Jackson Center One
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, California 94607

Newsletter contributions are encouraged from all sources. Contact the Natural Resource teams in the Seattle and Oakland Support Offices.



Special thanks for this newsletter edition goes to Jim Shevock, Associate Regional Director for Resource Stewardship and Partnership, and a big promoter of the PWR Natural Resource Challenge

The Natural Resource Challenge is increasing NPS scientific understanding in parks all around the nation, from Maine to Florida to Alaska and the Pacific Islands. For more information about the Natural Resource Challenge, visit www.nature.nps.gov/challenge/nrc.htm.

